



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on the Reported Russian Deployment of SS-21 Missiles in the South Ossetia Region

As delivered by Ambassador Ian Kelly
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
January 27, 2011

The United States is also concerned about recent press reports of statements by Russian military officials regarding the deployment of an additional battalion of the Tactical Operational Missile Complex "Tochka – U" and Smerch multiple-launch rocket systems to the South Ossetia region. We urge the Russian Federation to avoid any actions that may raise tensions or could contribute to insecurity or instability in the region.

We take this opportunity to once again call for the resumption of meaningful international monitoring presences in the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia. The continued absence of transparency and international monitoring in South Ossetia makes it impossible for the international community to assess reports such as these. This underscores the need for full implementation of the August 2008 cease-fire commitments agreed to by both Russia and Georgia. It is also important to redouble efforts within the OSCE to find ways to increase transparency regarding military forces and deployments.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.